OCS

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Dear Governor du Pont:

This responds to your December 14 mailgram asking the President of the United States to make military aircraft available to remove the deceased Jonestown victims to California and offering to assist in that removal. As you know, I met yesterday with Congressman Evans, representatives of your office and of the City of Dover, members of the staffs of Senators Roth and Biden, and State representatives Robert Riddogh and Michael Harrington to discuss this issue. Representatives from the Departments of Defense and Justice also attended that meeting.

We appreciate the concerns that you and your colleagues have, but it is not possible for the bodies to be transported to California by military aircraft.

The next of kin of the deceased are currently claiming bodies and removing them from Delaware. As of today, approximately 240 bodies have been removed, and we expect a substantial additional number of bodies to be removed in the coming weeks.

There have been some indications, which we are exploring, that the People's Temple may be willing to assume responsibility for the removal and burial of these bodies.

We expect to know within a reasonable time how many unidentified or unclaimed bodies will have to be disposed of. We assured Congressman Evans and his colleagues yesterday that we would make every effort to have some reasonable firm projections as soon as possible. It is our hope that the People's Temple

The Honorable
Pierre S. du Pont IV,
Governor of Delaware,
Dover.

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will assume responsibility for the unidentified, unclaimed bodies, and we will pursue that possibility vigorously. Let me assure you again, as we have previously done, that there will be no "mass burial" in Delaware. We are grateful to you and your colleagues for the assistance that we have been given so far, and we would appreciate your continuing cooperation with respect to this matter.

The Jonestown tragedy is of course unique and has imposed tremendous burdens on all of us. We will continue to do what we can to minimize the impact on your state.

Sincerely,

Barbara M. Watson

Clearances:
CA/OCS - Mr. Gise
ARA - John Bushnell (draft)

L:LRMarks:jfm ext. 28460

12/22/78

cc: NSC - Mr. Guy Erb
- Christine Dodson
Interagency Task Force Memb